

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 07546 201429Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1822

S E C R E T BEIRUT 7546

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR

SUBJECT: EVACUATION PLANNING

1. DURING MEETING WITH AL REP AL-KHOLI REPORTED SEPTTEL, CHARGE DISCUSSED WITH HIM SECURITY SITUATION IN WEST BEIRUT. AL-KHOLI, WHO HAS BEEN SHOT AT THREE TIMES IN WEST BEIRUT, IS FULLY AWARE OF THE DANGERS. AL-KHOLI SAID THAT IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, AL FORCES WOULD BE WILLING TO ASSIST IN PROTECTION OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN WEST BEIRUT PROVIDED THAT THE AUTHORITIES CURRENTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY IN THIS AREA (THE PLO) GAVE THEIR PERMISSION.

2. EMBASSY BELIEVES AL FORCES OFFER A POTENTIALLY USEFUL ALTERNATIVE IN PROVIDING PROTECTION FOR DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN WEST BEIRUT IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES. IF, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WERE TO BE A CHRISTIAN ATTACK THROUGH THE HOTEL DISTRICT, OR SECURITY IN WEST BEIRUT WERE TO BREAK DOWN, PLO MIGHT BE UNWILLING OR UNABLE TO PROVIDE PROTECTION FOR EMBASSIES BUT MIGHT BE WILLING TO AUTHORIZE AL PEACE-KEEPING FORCE TO UNDERTAKE THIS MISSION. IF DEPT CONCURS, CHARGE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THIS POSSIBILITY WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR ARGOD AND BRITISH CHARGE HANCOCK. IF THEY SEE MERIT IN THE SUGGESTION, WE MIGHT SUGGEST TO AMBASSADOR ARGOD, AS SENIOR WESTERN DIPLOMATI IN WEST BEIRUT, THAT HE TOO RAISE THIS QUESTION WITH AL-KHOLI.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 07546 201429Z

WE WOULD NOT PROPOSE THAT AL PEACE-KEEPING FORCE

ASK THE PLO NOW FOR ITS PERMISSION TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROTECTION OF EMBASSIES IN WEST BEIRUT. THE INTENTION WOULD BE SIMPLY TO PLANT THE IDEA WITH AL-KHOLI AND GENERAL GHONEIM SO THAT, IF THE NEED ARISES, THEY WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH THE IDEA AND MORE PREPARED TO ACT QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY.

3. CURRENT STRENGTH OF AL PEACE-KEEPING FORCE IN LEBANON IS NOW ESTIMATED AT ABOUT "000#LIBYAN, SAUDI, SUDANESE AND SYRIAN TROOPS. ACCORDING TO AL-KHOLI, UNITS OF THIS FORCE CAN BE MOBILIZED AND DESPATCHED IN TWENTY MINUTES. SINCE UK, US, AND FRENCH EMBASSIES ARE LOCATED RELATIVELY CLOSE TO EACH OTHER, A UNIT FROM THIS FORCE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ASSIST ALL OF US IN A SINGLE OPERATION, SHOULD AN EVACUATION FROM THIS PART OF BEIRUT BECOME NECESSARY.

4. PLEASE ADVISE.
LANE

NOTE BY OC/T: BEIRUT 7546. #AS RECEIVED PARA 3. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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NNN

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